

The Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee:

Legislative Office Building
Room 3500
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

March 14, 2014

Re: **HB 5528 - AN ACT CONCERNING ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES**

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee

My name is Raymond E. Sullivan, M.D., Director of the Brookfield Health Department and a member of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH). I am writing on behalf of my town to urge your support of House Bill 5528, An Act Concerning Essential Public Health Services. Here are the most critical reasons:

- **Connecticut's existing 8 public health mandates in the state statutes are severely outdated and no longer apply to local health departments and districts.**
Local health departments are no longer responsible for emergency medical services, genetic disease oversight, or other specific services listed under the eight mandates. Outdated statutes, in existence for over 30 years, could make it harder to access federal funds in the future. It is indeed time to move Public Health into the 21st Century.
- **Nationally, local health departments embrace the 10 essential public health services as the standard for services.** The ten essential public health services are included in the curriculum of accredited public health programs taught by academic institutions in Connecticut and across the country. Additionally, the national standard for voluntary accreditation for public health agencies uses the 10 essential services as their foundation. However, I do take issue with the language of the Bill for essential service function #8. Local health can only be responsible for ensuring a competent and well trained workforce, and cannot be held responsible for doing so for "health care professionals," as variously defined currently, in statutes.
- **Every Connecticut resident should be assured provision of the 10 essential public health services.** No matter where a citizen resides or where tourists or visitors in CT are located, public health services should be equitably available. The ten essential services provide accountability by linking public health performance to health outcomes.
- **The ten essential services also provide the basis for our Community Health Assessments and our Community Health Improvement Plans.** The Town of Brookfield Health Department has played a strong role in the development of a Community Health Assessment for the Greater Danbury area, in cooperation with 10 surrounding towns. Our Improvement Plan and plans for becoming accredited by the National Association of City and County Health Officials is based upon the Ten Essential Services.

Lastly, I make a plea to make this Bill fair to ALL Connecticut residents, rather than those who are served by Health Districts and larger municipalities, alone. Fully one third of state residents are omitted under current funding guidelines - a throwback to earlier DPH recommendations under a prior administration. Every resident and taxpayer has an equitable right to state funding of local public health services. Given the huge number of unfunded legislative mandates our smaller departments face, this Bill should be broadened to provide nominal per capita contributions to all local health departments in the state.

I welcome the opportunity to meet or talk by phone with any of you, to discuss further how best to ensure that, moving forward, we can advance public health service quality and performance. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Raymond E. Sullivan, M.D., FACS

Director of Health, Town of Brookfield

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